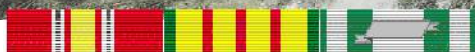




388TH



Newsletter of the Carson Area Chapter - 388 of the Vietnam Veterans of America
commobunker388@charter.net



TASK FORCE 116 - OPERATION GAME WARDEN

During the Vietnam War, Commander U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam (COMNAVFORV) was responsible for securing the many rivers and canals that wound their way through the lush, tropical landscape of South Vietnam. In Operation Game Warden, Navy river patrol boats (PBR) organized as Task Force 116 (known as the "brown water navy") moved along the major rivers of the Mekong Delta and further north near Hue. The mission of these units was to deny the enemy use of the waterways for transporting guerrillas and supplies.

The "Monitor" boats were the battleships of the Mobile Riverine Force. They were equipped with varied armament including 105mm cannon in turrets, 40mm cannon, or napalm weapons as in this photo. These Zippo Boats were very effective against VC spider holes or other such bunkers and fortifications

The Vietnamese used a multitude of boats called junks and sampans, any one of which could be helping the Viet Cong. The sampans, made of bamboo, were capable of navigating in only a few inches of water and could travel practically unseen under the overhanging vegetation lining the banks of a river or mangrove swamp. Every day, sailors of the Navy's River Patrol Force, with air support from heavily armed UH-1B Huey helicopters of Navy Helicopter Attack (Light) Squadron 3, the "Seawolves," stopped and searched the sampans and similar small craft for hidden munitions and other contraband. The discovery of Viet Cong guerrillas operating on the river, which occurred often, led to fierce gun battles at close quarters.

Equally important to the war on the rivers were the Navy's highly trained, motivated, and courageous SEAL (Sea, Air, and Land) naval special forces, first used in Vietnam. Small detachments of SEALs operated routinely in Viet Cong-controlled areas gathering intelligence

Cont'd. on Page 3



NATIONAL VOTER OUTREACH

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CEO

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Tom Spencer	Vice President
Jack McQuirk	Treasurer
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Darrol Brown
Neal Davies
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Darrol Brown/Bruce Bertram
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Rick Arnold
Lee Jackson

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day	Rick Arnold
Wreaths Across America	
Veterans Day Committee	
Others (as called for by the President)	

** Membership established by Chapter By-Laws
Chapter President is a member of all Committees



388th is a monthly publication of the Vietnam Veterans of America - Carson Area Chapter 388 and is published solely for the education of and communication with its membership and other interested parties. Not for Sale.

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Chapter 388 Website: <http://vva388.com/>

Chapter Facebook Page: VVA Chapter 388 Carson City Nevada

Chapter President: Frank Reynolds: vva388@gmail.com

Chapter Meetings:

Veterans Hall - 2nd and Curry Streets, Carson City, NV 89701
1st Thursday of each month - 5:30 pm

Breakfast Meetings

Grandma Hatties Restaurant - 2811 So. Carson St., Carson City
Mid- Month - email vva388@gmail.com for specific date and time.



Officials with the U.S. Department of Defence confirmed the remains of Pfc. Kenneth Leroy Cunningham of Ellery, Illinois.

He had been missing since Oct. 3, 1969. He was 21 at the time.

Cunningham's remains will be flown back to the United States this month, arriving in Louisville, Kentucky on Jan 19. His remains will then be escorted back to Albion, Illinois for funeral services and burial.

Since 1973, the remains of more than 1,600 Americans killed in the Vietnam War have been identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

The U.S. has conducted joint field activities with the governments of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to recover the remains of missing Americans.

POW/MIA Status as of January 4, 2016

1,624 Americans are now listed by DoD as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

(Vietnam - 1,266 (VN-467 VS-799); Laos-302; Cambodia-49; Peoples Republic of China territorial waters-7)

HOUSE EYES GIVING WIDOWS MORE RELIEF FROM SURVIVOR BENEFIT OFFSET

In a hopeful sign for 60,000 military widows and widowers who lost spouses to service-connected illnesses or injuries, a key House subcommittee is taking a fresh look at how Congress might provide heartier survivor benefit packages.

Rep. Joe Heck, R-Nev., chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel, isn't promising specific relief from the offset, which surviving spouses prefer to call the military widows' tax.



Heck understands, as do organizations advocating for the widows, that partial offset relief through a Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance is set to expire in fall of 2017. So unless Congress acts by then to end the offset, or more likely to continue or even to bolster the SSIA, then surviving spouses again would feel the full brunt of the offset.

Cont'd. from Page 1

and killing or capturing key enemy personnel. Navy mine countermeasures units, despite losing a number of minesweeping boats to enemy rocket propelled grenades and command-detonated mines, kept the tortuous, 45-mile channel from the sea to Saigon, a major logistics hub in southern South Vietnam, open throughout the war.

Sharing these inland operating areas was the joint Army-Navy Mobile Riverine Force, which consisted of heavily armed and armored monitors, troop carriers, assault support patrol boats, and combat troops from the U.S. Army's 9th Infantry Division who often closed with the enemy. In battle after battle, the naval force deployed troops on the flanks and rear of Communist combat units and with American helicopter teams decimated the enemy forces.

Task Force 116 was the most highly decorated naval command of the war with two recipients of the Medal of Honor, 14 recipients of the Navy Cross and numerous recipients of Silver Stars, Bronze Stars and Purple Hearts.



The original Game Warden TF-116 consisted of the following units:

Support Ships (1966)

- USS BELLE GROVE (LSD-2)
- USS COMSTOCK (LSD-19)
- USS TORTUGA (LSD-26)
- USS FLOYD COUNTY (LST-762)

Support Ships 1967-1968

- ◇ 4 specially modified Landing Ship Tank (LST)
 - USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST-786)
 - USS HARNETT COUNTY (LST-821)
 - USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (LST-821)
 - USS JENNINGS COUNTY (LST-846)
 - 20 Landing Craft (LCVP)
 - 8 UH-1B Huey Helicopters
- 120 specially designed River Patrol Boats (PBRs)
 - ◇ River Patrol Force (PBR)
 - River Division 51 Can Tho / Binh Thuy
 - River Division 52 Sa Dec (later Vinh Long)
 - River Division 53 My Tho
 - River Division 54 Nha Be
 - River Division 55 DaNang

THE SON TAY RAID

In 1970, U.S. forces attempted to rescue POWs from captivity in North Vietnam. American officials decided a daring operation in the heart of North Vietnam was worth the risk, and President Richard Nixon asked the Pentagon to explore "some unconventional rescue ideas."



Planning the Raid

The target was the Son Tay POW camp, only 23 miles west of the North Vietnamese capital Hanoi. Intelligence analysts believed as many as 55 prisoners were there.

The raid was a joint-service operation. An Air Force assault group would fly Army Special Forces to Son Tay under cover of darkness, rescue the POWs, and leave. The Navy, meanwhile, would create a diversion by flying over Haiphong Harbor on the coast northeast of Hanoi and dropping flares to simulate an attack.

More than 100 aircraft and many support and planning personnel were involved. The Air Force group included assault, attack, tanker, air defense suppression and command and control aircraft. The Army force included 56 handpicked Special Forces troops to engage the enemy on the ground, free the POWs and lead them to rescue helicopters. The teams trained intensely at Eglin AFB, Florida, where they used a full-size mockup of the camp. They also used the scale model on display in this exhibit.

Kingpin

On the night of Nov. 20, 1970, the raiding force of six helicopters, two large support aircraft, and five small attack planes took off from Thailand. Meanwhile, Navy carrier aircraft created a diversion over the Haiphong area. The raiders approached Son Tay at low level, arriving at about 2:18 a.m.

The area was lit with flares, and the first helicopter over the camp destroyed guard towers and barracks with a hail of mini-gun fire. The next helicopter made a planned, controlled crash landing in the middle of the camp, chewing up trees with its blades. Green Berets piled out to rescue prisoners from their cells. A third helicopter landed outside the camp, firing on barracks and delivering more Army Green berets.

Meanwhile, the fourth helicopter had mistakenly landed at a similar-looking compound nearby--easy enough to do in the fog of war. There, Green Berets found themselves in a firefight, but suffered no casualties. A scenario where part of the assault force could not reach the objective had been practiced many times, and the group recovered quickly by exchanging attack roles.

Cont'd on Page 4

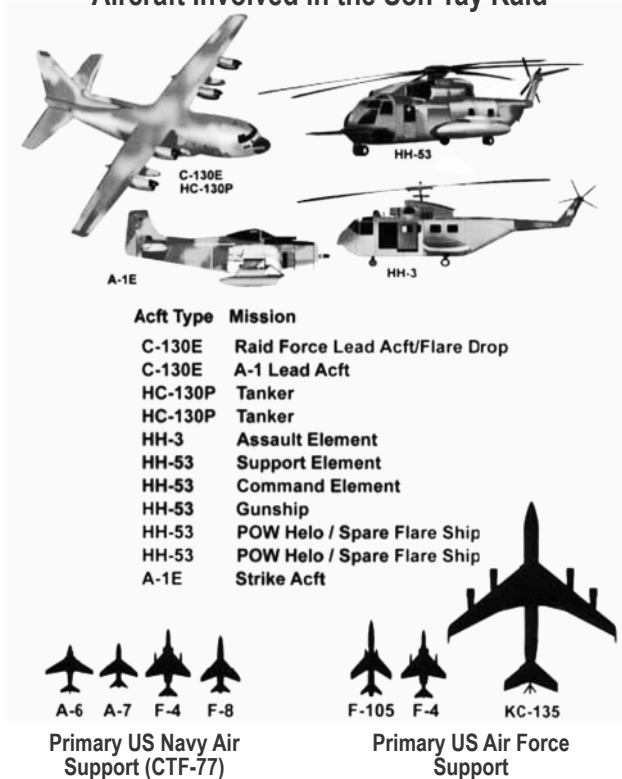
"Negative Items"

The raiders found that the prison camp held no POWs. They reported "negative items" (no POWs) on the radio, boarded two helicopters and withdrew. As the force left North Vietnam, one Wild Weasel F-105 fighter was hit with a surface-to-air missile. Its crew ejected over Laos, and two of the returning Son Tay helicopters quickly rescued them. The raid had taken 27 minutes, and the raiders suffered one broken ankle and one minor wound. All 56 Army personnel plus the aircraft crews returned safely.

Aftermath

Despite rescuing no prisoners, the raid proved a success in other ways. It caused North Vietnam to gather POWs in fewer locations to prevent similar raids, making POW communication and organization easier. POW morale soared. Later, one recalled that "...the Son Tay rescue attempt dispelled all doubt: We were not forgotten; our country cared!!" The daring raid so close to Hanoi demonstrated that the U.S. had the will and means to carry out exceptional operations to ensure POW well-being. The Son Tay raid was one of the most complex and dangerous missions of the Southeast Asia War. It laid the groundwork for future joint forces operations by serving as a model of organization, cooperation, and flexible execution.

Aircraft Involved in the Son Tay Raid





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WEARING UNEARNED MILITARY MEDAL IS PROTECTED BY CONSTITUTION

A federal law that prohibited people from wearing military medals they didn't earn is unconstitutional for the same reason as a law that made it a crime to lie about earning a medal, a federal appeals court ruled Monday: It's a falsehood that is protected by freedom of speech.

In an 8-3 ruling, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco said the now-repealed law against wearing unearned military decorations was a ban on a type of "symbolic speech." Although the government can forbid falsehoods that cause tangible harm, like fraud or perjury, the Constitution restricts government regulation of expression based solely on its content, the court said.

"Suppressing a symbolic communication threatens the same First Amendment harm as suppressing a written communication," Judge Sandra Ikuta said in the majority opinion. "Wearing a medal has no purpose other than to communicate a message."

She cited the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in 2012 striking down a related law that prohibited lying about receiving a military honor. That 5-4 decision said the law punished speech without requiring proof of intent to defraud, and that the government had other ways of protecting the public from deception — for example, an easily accessible database of legitimate medal recipients.

A year after that ruling, Congress enacted a revised law that makes it a crime to lie about military honors, but only if the liar intended to profit or defraud someone. The new law does not punish someone solely for wearing an unearned medal.

Dissenters from Monday's ruling said falsely wearing medals is conduct, not speech, and is potentially more harmful than lying about them.

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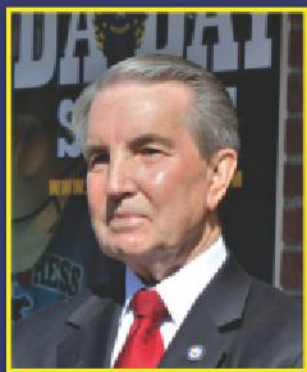
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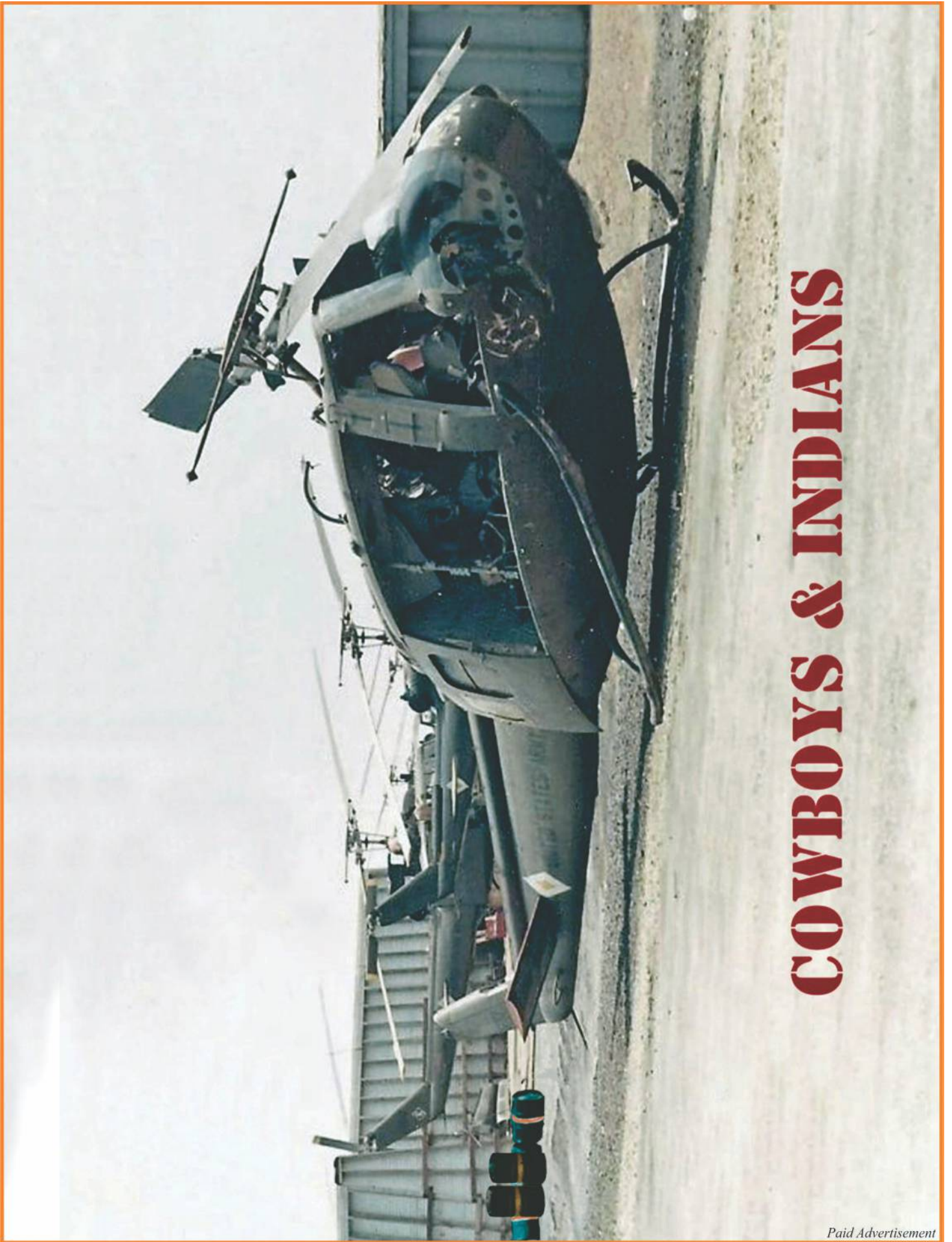
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AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Prisoner of War Medal

by John Hussong

“Eligibility for the award goes to personnel serving in any capacity with the U.S. Armed Forces”

Being taken prisoner and held captive while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States; while engaged in military operations involving conflict against an opposing foreign force; while serving with friendly forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force to which the United States is not a belligerent; or under circumstances not covered by [the 1985 statute] but which the Secretary concerned finds were comparable to those circumstances under which persons have generally been held captive by enemy armed forces during periods of armed conflict.



Prior to October 2011, federal law provided that any false verbal, written or physical claim to the Prisoner of War Medal, by an individual to whom it has not been awarded, shall be fined and/or imprisoned for not more than six months. In October of 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Stolen Valor Act for violating the First Amendment. This effectively invalidated all legislation that criminalized false oral claims to U.S. decorations. In response, Congress passed H.R. 258, the Stolen Valor Act of 2013. In response, which was more limited in scope and only criminalized false claims to; the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross, Air Force Cross, Silver Star, Purple Heart and the Combat Badge “with the intent to obtain money, property or other tangible benefit.” Since the Prisoner of War Medal was not included, claims to this award are no longer criminal under this statute.

Note: Due to a provision in the FY 1996 National Defense Authorization Act, service secretaries are required to award the Purple Heart to any POW Medal recipients wounded in captivity. The law specified that [a] person shall be considered to be a former prisoner of war for the purposes of this section IF the person is eligible for the prisoner-of-war medal under section 1128 of Title 10, United States Code. The corresponding DoD regulation also specifies that any “service member who is killed or dies while in captivity” after April 5, 1917 can receive the medal as long as it was a result of enemy action.

NAPALM, THE OTHER CHEMICAL



During the Vietnam War, the United States military used chemical agents in its fight against Ho Chi Minh's Army of North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. The most important of those chemical weapons were the defoliant Agent Orange and the incendiary - napalm. While a lot has been said about Agent Orange and its disastrous effects on both military and civilians, napalm is seldom talked about.

Napalm in Warfare

Incendiary devices have been used as a tool of war since 1200 B.C. Perhaps the most well-known of such devices was “Greek fire”, a weapon said to have been invented in the seventh century A.D. and used by Eastern Roman Emperors.

Napalm was invented in a top-secret 1942 war research collaboration between Harvard University and the U.S. government, used to devastating effect in Europe and the Pacific during World War II — most notably to incinerate 64 of Japan's largest cities — and in most major military conflicts after 1945, notably in Korea and Vietnam.

Napalm, itself, is a gel, which in its original form contained naphthenic and palmitic acid plus petroleum as fuel. The modern version, Napalm B, contains plastic polystyrene, hydrocarbon benzene, and gasoline. It burns at temperatures of 800 to 1,200 °C (1,500 - 2,200 °F).

In Vietnam, the most frequently used container for napalm held about 130 gallons of gasoline with a solution of six percent napalm added. When dropped from an altitude of about 100 feet — the device was able to cover a surface with flames 270 feet long and 75 feet wide. It is noted, however, that enemy quickly caught on to this devastating weapon and it is one reason they “dig-in,” finding shelter underground in thousands of connecting tunnel systems.

Napalm was also delivered by flamethrowers, either hand held, vehicle mounted, or mounted on U.S. Navy vessels plying the inland waterways of South Vietnam.

When napalm falls on people, the gel sticks to their skin, hair, and clothing, causing unimaginable pain, severe burns, unconsciousness, asphyxiation, and often death. Even those who do not get hit directly with napalm can die from its effects, since it burns at such high temperatures that it can create firestorms that use up much of the oxygen in the air. Bystanders also can suffer heat stroke, smoke exposure, and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Reportedly about 388,000 tons of U.S. napalm bombs were dropped in the Vietnam region between 1963 and 1973, compared to 32,357 tons used over three years in the Korean War, and 16,500 tons dropped on Japan in 1945.

Other countries that have used napalm, in addition to the United States, include: Greece (the first use after World War II), France, Britain, Portugal, United Nations forces in Korea, the Philippines, South Vietnam and North Vietnam (in flamethrowers), Cuba, Peru, Bolivia, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, India, Iraq, Nigeria, and Brazil.

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Brenda Horton, HLM

VVA-388/Adopt a Vet Dental Program Volunteer Case Manager

The New Year has arrived and the Adopt a Vet Dental program is in full swing. Yesterday I received a phone call from a veteran (USMC) who was in pain due to a broken tooth at the gum line. He quickly found out that the VA no longer provided dental treatment in his case though had in the past due to his medical condition. A call went out to a couple of dentist seeking assistance in the extraction of this tooth root. An AAVD participating dentist here in Carson City willingly fit him in his schedule and they made it convenient for me for I was taking another non-driving veteran to that office for treatment today and therefore scheduled the veteran to follow afterwards. It is always heartwarming when searching for a dentist to treat a veteran in an emergency situation, especially when the procedure can be somewhat difficult. Both these veterans served as Marines so the waiting room quickly filled with stories of places they both had been stationed at. This occurrence is why we, Chapter 388 are involved in this worthwhile program. It is not as simple as just writing a check in support, but actually "hands on" assisting veterans. Chapter members provide transportation to those who have no way of getting to their appointments in a timely manner. I personally don't think it appropriate for a veteran just finishing a dental appointment waiting for a bus especially in inclement weather. Other members actively get involved with the annual Poker Run or as completed program participants speak highly of the program to other veterans, media and their communities. Chapter members also speak to their personal dentist and ask him/her if they don't participate who they be interested.

On the last note, I am aware that Carson City Harley Davidson is no longer in business. We will be seeking a new location and set a date for the 4th annual Poker Run tentatively planned in August 2016. If anyone is aware of an appropriate location that can accommodate 100 bikers and riders please let me know. Remember we need space for serving a lunch, having a band and in a convenient location.

As always, I thank you for your support.

To all members who have recently ordered Chapter shirts: They are in and will be available at the next Chapter meeting - February 4th.
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Date Event Location

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Gary Armstrong	Jan 6	Bob Zajonc	Feb 7
Steve Louks	Jan 7	Arlo Miller	Feb 18
Denis Wooton	Jan 7	Rosevelt Reed	Feb 18
Jim Caughron	Jan 8	Jim Whiteside	Feb 22
Frank Carpenter	Jan 10	Rick Arnold	Feb 23
Doug Harvey	Jan 14	Curtis McLachlan	Feb 23
Bob Beattie	Jan 16	Gerald Bowers	Feb 28
Arlene Larson	Jan 16		
Terry Potter	Jan 22		
Bill Brazil	Jan 24		
Ron Stillwell	Jan 24		
Paul Desoronier	Jan 28		
Dean Meryhew	Jan 28		
Ed Phillips	Jan 30		

JANUARY FACTOID

240 men were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War.

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Websites

VVA www.vva.org

- Programs, News, Forms, Services, Applications
- Benefits, Publications/Forms, LSO Listings
- 1-877-222-8387 (Help Line)
- 1-800-237-8255 (Crisis Line)
- 1-877-424-3838 (Homeless)

Service Records www.archives.gov

Memorial Wall Research www.virtualwall.org

Agent Orange Website www.lewispublishing.com

- FAQ's, Maps, VA Compensation & Claims

General Military www.military.com

- Benefit Info, News, Stories, Buddy Finder

Nevada Dept. of Veteran Services www.veterans.nv.us

- Benefit Info, News

Army Times www.armytimes.com

- Online Publication, News, Benefit Info

Navy Times www.navytimes.com

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Marine Corps Times www.marinecorpstimes.com

- Online Publication, News, Benefit Info

Air Force Times www.airforcetimes.com

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50th Anniversary - Vietnam War www.vietnam50th.com

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Katherine Miller, Director - millerk@veterans.nv.gov



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